

MORALITY AND WAR

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By

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PREFACE

THE following pages were written some months ago ; and publication was fixed for September 22. Now, contrary to the hope and expectation of many, including the author, war is upon us. One's first impulse was to suggest that publication be deferred : that the time for discussion was over. But the aim of the book was never controversial : it was written in the hope of helping those who are worried by the moral issues raised by war to see the problem clearly and completely ; and so to avoid those judgements, too often made, which rest on this or that element of the problem and ignore others. Perhaps it may still serve that purpose. The first principles of the ethics of war as of international ethics in general are clear and definite. But where deduction from those principles is in question, the ground is less sure : the principles have to be applied to new circumstances, new situations have to be judged, new problems faced. That is why, to-day, there is so much careful thinking to be done. What follows was put forward tentatively, and subject of course to the judgement of the Church, as no more than a personal contribution, based on traditional principles, to the work of clarification. War, it argues, is sometimes a right, and indeed a duty : when, and in what circumstances, is this the case? In treating of the problem of methods, one wrote necessarily in the light of what seemed to be the probabilities :

whether such judgements of probability will prove to have been mistaken, not only in the early stages, but later on in the course of what may be a long and perhaps increasingly bitter conflict, we cannot yet say : we can only hope and pray that they will. But behind all the particular ethical problems there is the wider and deeper question of the christian approach to war in general, the christian attitude of mind. If these pages can help in any way in these tragic days to recall the essentials of that attitude—and no doubt we shall often need to remind ourselves of them—it will not have been written in vain.

G. V.

LAXTON, *September 8, 1939.*

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MORALITY AND WAR

I

ENDS AND MEANS

ON August 27, 1928, the nations of the world, through their representatives, signed a pact in which they solemnly declared that they condemned recourse to war for the settlement of international differences, and renounced it as an instrument of national policy. To-day, only eleven years later, we are faced with the spectacle of a world expending unimaginable sums on rearmament, and living in dread of the catastrophe which many believe to be inevitable. The attitude of the ordinary man or woman in face of this tragic insanity is a mixture of repulsion and fatalist resignation. The peoples of the world—not of this or that country merely, but of all countries—do not want war ; on the contrary, there has never in the history of the race been a desire for peace so universal and so vehement. Modern methods of warfare have stripped it of all romantic glamour ; and we are under no illusions as to its beastliness and its futility. It is difficult, and may well become increasingly difficult, for a nation to initiate war. There is a sense in which every nation to-day is democratic : for in every nation the will of the people to some extent at

least checks the power of their leader. That is why, as Mortimer J. Adler has pointed out, the Ministry of Propaganda is of such importance in the authoritarian states. But it is precisely that weapon of propaganda that we have to fear, not only in the authoritarian states, but in all the states of the world. Skilful propaganda is hard to resist ; and even if its dishonesties were circumvented or exposed, it would be difficult for any nation to make its will felt as a unity against the will of its leaders. So, parallel with the feeling of repulsion and hatred for war, there is a feeling of resigned readiness, perhaps cynical, perhaps idealist, to accept the worst, if it comes. And there are many who argue, with sound enough logic, that to be a professed pacifist is to do a disservice to peace, because the stronger—perhaps even the more bellicose—we are, the less chance is there of our being attacked.

But for the christian the main problem must always be, not utilitarian, but moral : not what is the best policy, but what is right. And there are many christians to-day who find themselves in a very tragic dilemma. They are aware of, and share in, the universal conviction that war as we know it to-day ought indeed to be outlawed as the Pact of Paris outlawed it ; they are reluctant to appear, as christians, less civilized, less humane, above all, less true to ideals, than those who do not profess to follow the teaching of Christ ; they know, moreover, that there are many who have become convinced that war to-day is incompatible with the teaching of Christ. On the other hand, they feel strongly their duty to their country ; and they cannot entertain with anything but revulsion the idea of refusing to serve if their country should in fact be involved in a war which seemed to them just.

It is a tragedy that we catholics should be divided, in these critical days, not indeed in our judgements on political facts, or on questions of political expediency, but on the way in which the principles commonly accepted by theologians as relevant to war should be applied to-day. I shall hope, in these pages, to do one thing : to make quite clear *what the real problem is*. That is the first essential, if we are to hope ever to reach an agreed solution.

One of the greatest enemies of the truth is the *simpliste*. He is the man who cannot, or will not, see the whole of a problem, but fixes on one element in it and proceeds to treat that as if it were in fact the whole problem. He thereby obscures the real problem, because he sets up in its place a pseudo-problem. There are *simplistes* who base their arguments on the Gospels. On the one hand it will be asked, How can war be permissible in view of the fact that Christ commanded Peter to sheath his sword? That is irrelevant ; a pseudo-problem. On the other hand, it will be asked, How can war be wrong, considering that Christ drove the buyers and sellers out of the Temple with a little whip made of cords? That is a pseudo-problem. Some will argue that Christ told us to turn the other cheek ; forgetting that abstention from war may mean turning not one's own but somebody else's cheek. Others will argue that St. Augustine held war to be justified, and that what is good enough for Augustine is good enough for us ; forgetting that what was war for Augustine is not necessarily war for us. The list could be enlarged indefinitely ; and all the arguments of this type will sin equally by simplification. We shall not arrive at the truth by simplifying the issue ; for by simplifying it we, in fact, refuse to face it. The

search for the truth is hard ; that is why the christian life is hard, for the christian life is the search for the truth. We shall not be faithful christians if we try to make the truth easy by doing violence to it.

As catholics, confronted with the moral problem of war, we have two things to consider. On the one hand we are concerned with the facts of modern war : war as we know it to-day, its sources, its aims, its extension, its methods. On the other hand we are concerned with the principles of christian morality as revealed by Christ and preserved and elucidated by the living authority of the Church and of tradition. If we simplify the facts, preferring, for example, to concern ourselves with medieval methods of warfare and arguing in the light of those methods rather than ours, we do violence to the truth. If we simplify the principles, fastening on this or that text in the Gospels, or this or that text from one of the Fathers, and ignoring the rest, we do violence to the truth.

One of the most dangerous and misleading of simplifications is that which consists in ignoring the question of means. Much of the scandal given by christians to the world comes of the fact that, having convinced themselves that their aims are just, they feel no obligation to inquire into the legitimacy of the means they propose to adopt in order to achieve them. They will, for example, proclaim a holy crusade against communism or materialism, or paganism of one sort or another ; and, convinced of the justice of their cause, will not hesitate to bomb and burn the poor in pursuit of their object. The problem of means is of absolutely capital importance ; it is precisely with the problem of means that christian morality is concerned. One of the most terrifying phenomena which confront us

if we examine our catholic life, the life of catholic society, to-day, is in fact the apparent forgetfulness of this truth : the apparent surrender which we seem to make to moralities which are not christian, and which are based on the assumption that in pursuit of a cause which is either necessitated by the dialectic of history, or justified by the biological or mystical needs of an evolving people or political structure, all means are equally valid.

‘ We forget that evil remains evil, and that it also grows and multiplies . . . that the accomplished horror remains accomplished ; and that the suffering and despair of men, a single tear, a single cry torn from the heart by injustice—there can indeed be a recompense for these things (for that cause Jesus died), but they cannot be effaced, they will never be effaced, no, never in all the world again. We forget that it is these errors and faults, these lies, these cruelties, these blindnesses, all this machinery of the “realists” of sinful means brought into action for good ends . . . it is these things which principally and primarily have brought christendom to the state in which it is to-day, have brought about that universal misfortune of which civilization to-day shows us the picture. Christendom will re-create itself by christian means, or come to its complete undoing.’¹

The end does not justify the means. Either the end aimed at, or the means adopted to achieve it, can make an action wrong ; only if both are equally good can the action be right. That is the first principle which should govern our thought throughout all this problem. If we are inquiring of any action whether it be good or

¹ J. Maritain : *The Question of a Holy War*, Colosseum, September 1937, p. 118.

bad, we have always three things to consider. There is the action itself ; there is the motive which prompts us to do the action ; there are the attendant circumstances, chief of which in this context is the means employed. Thus, to help the needy is in itself a good action. But if I help a person in need simply in order to acquire a reputation for sanctity, the action, as *my* action, becomes bad. Or again, if I help a person in need solely from motives of charity, but, in order to help him, rob a third party, again the action becomes bad. It can only be good provided that, not one element alone, but all the elements which go to make it up in its entirety as a human action, are good.

The application to war is obvious. Let us suppose that the case for war is so strong as to seem not merely a right but a duty : a case, for example, in which a nation is called to help an ally, to which it is bound by treaty, against an attack which is absolutely unprovoked and absolutely unjustifiable. Is all discussion at an end ? By no means ; for we must ask whether the ally of the attacked nation will be justified if, in joining in the conflict, its sole motive is in fact the hope of being able to add to its own territory or wealth or aggrandizement. Again, supposing its motives to be unexceptionable, we must still go on to ask whether the methods it will adopt are equally just. It is right to defend an individual against robbery ; but it is not right to go beyond what is necessary, and to kill the robber, his wife, and his children, and burn down his house, in order to prevent any possibility of his repeating the attempt. Thus, the question of the morality of means is of paramount importance in the problem of war because if the means used are wrong, the war will be wrong. But it is of paramount impor-

tance also because war itself, war of any sort, no matter what methods of warfare it employs, is itself a means to an end. So that before we begin to discuss war methods, we have to ask in general whether it is right to employ this means, war in general, in pursuit of political ends. There are, then, three questions. First, is the end envisaged by a nation contemplating war a morally good end? Secondly, is war in general morally justifiable as a means to achieve that end? Thirdly, supposing the use of force to be justified, are the methods of warfare to be used in this case justifiable? Only if all three questions can be answered affirmatively shall we be able to conclude that the war is just, and that we, as individuals, are justified in taking active part in it.

It seems necessary to emphasize this point very strongly, because it is so often misunderstood. One finds it repeatedly argued that in such or such circumstances 'right is on our side.' This proves nothing unless at the same time we can be equally sure that war is a permissible means to establish that right, and that the methods employed in the sort of war which we shall wage are also right. If we talk about the problem of war without discussing the morality of means, we are simply discussing a pseudo-problem. It is useless to argue simply that there are still things worth fighting for; that is not the end of the problem, but the beginning. It is useless to argue that it is better to die in defending our birthright than to surrender it; because the problem concerns not dying but methods of killing.

But let us not deceive ourselves. We do not merely need to be reminded that the morality of means must not be forgotten. The danger to christian morality, referred to above, is not merely, perhaps not primarily,

that we tend to forget the consideration of means ; but that when we do consider them we tend to judge them in the light of the assumptions of non-christian morality. We live in an atmosphere which is largely materialist and utilitarian ; and we tend to make our judgements by materialist and utilitarian standards. We live, moreover, in a civilization which has consistently accepted war as an obvious and unexceptionable instrument of policy ; and we tend still to think of it in those terms. Finally, we live in a society which once was at least to a great extent christian : christian in the sense of accepting christian principles as the norm of social as well as individual action ; but which has ceased to be christian, and in which politics has ceased to recognize its subordination to theology, and become, in effect, simply power politics ; while we, as christians, continuing to live in that society, have not wholly succeeded in adjusting ourselves to the need for an independence of mind and judgement which was not to the same degree necessary when society was christian. The change from a predominantly christian to a predominantly pagan structure of society has been a slow process ; and its slowness tends to make us overlook the fact that it is radical.

The christian who is faithful to christianity, therefore, is bound to live in constant tension. He is torn between two worlds. On the one hand the Gospels : total obedience to the kingship of Christ—total because there can be no compromise between Christ and Mammon ; the establishment of the kingdom of Christ, of justice and charity, through means which themselves are Christlike, just, and charitable ; the belief that what ultimately matters in this life is the relation of the soul to God, and that the human person therefore is the

supreme earthly value, to which all material things are subordinate ; the belief, finally, that the duty of the christian is to spread the light of the Gospel as far as he may to all nations, that Christ died to save all men, and that all men therefore are potential members of Christ's Mystical Body, to be brought to that membership through the love of those who already are christians. That is the christian world. On the other hand, the predominantly pagan world of political organizations : obedience to the state ; defence of national rights, through means which, judged in the light of political expediency primarily, are adequate and pragmatically acceptable ; a belief which is sometimes tempered by partly christian, partly humanitarian considerations, that what ultimately matters is the vital interest of the state, and that the human person, therefore, is subordinate to that interest, and that as the end in view is largely material, expressible in terms of lines on a map, so the means to be used are material, and the introduction of ideal principles is at best an irrelevance. That, exaggerated by comparison with some current political theories and practice, minimized by comparison with others, is the world of politics. The christian, owing allegiance to both worlds at once, finds it difficult, and at times almost impossible, to reconcile his allegiances. In a christian society there would not be the same difficulty ; the christian sociology does not exclude the christian from citizenship in the earthly city ; on the contrary. But the difficulty for the christian of to-day lies in having to judge, not only the political facts which concern him, but the political judgements which are passed upon them, in the light of his faith, and to sort out, in those political judgements, what in fact is

compatible with christianity from what is not. The difficulty lies still more acutely in having to keep his own judgement free of the assumptions and the atmosphere in which those political judgements are passed.

Let us, without pre-judging any of the problems which have to be discussed later, consider modern war in general as it appears to some christian thinkers. 'The profoundest crime of war,' writes M. Pierre-Henri Simon, 'is that before taking a man's life it mutilates him in the inmost core of his personality. . . . Career, family, vocation : it knows nothing of these, and desires to know nothing ; it leaves of the personality only that element in it which makes it a unit in a society. Thenceforward, the man has no other interests, no other feelings, no other duties, than those of his tribe : a monstrous expansion of his social being absorbs his individual conscience.'¹ We are familiar with the *mystique* which glories in the subordination of the individual to the collectivity, his absorption in it ; it is one of the moralities against which the christian has to be most on his guard ; and it is a morality which is not confined altogether to a particular country or countries. The testimony of M. Simon is borne out by that of Professor Berdyaev. 'Wars in ancient times,' he writes, 'caused disaster and bloodshed, but there was something human in them ; modern war has nothing human in it, it is something satanic. . . . The tragedy of the situation lies in the fact that mankind holds in its hands instruments of wholesale destruction and death at a time when the recognition of the supreme value of man and of human life is in a state of terrible decline. The value of human personality is no longer recognized. . . . Above all else our epoch stands in

¹ *Discours sur la Guerre Possible*, p. 20.

desperate need of learning to prize man more highly, of acknowledging the value of every man, even of the least, because every single one bears within him the image and likeness of God. For this reason we may never regard man as a means to an end, or turn him into a tool in the hands of the state, so as to aid its expansion or encourage its desire for national glorification. Such, at least, is the christian point of view. For christianity man stands far higher than the state, and is far more precious than the state—each man is unique, an unrepeatable personality. The technics of war deny man, deny humanity as such; they are moved by inhuman powers and principles.¹

We cannot judge modern war adequately if we limit ourselves to its surface characteristics or utilities. That is the first conclusion that may be drawn from statements such as these. Christian tradition has always taught that a just war is a possibility. But it means by that a war which, in all its elements, is obedient to the ruling of christian principles. We shall have, then, in considering the problem of war in detail in succeeding chapters, to bear always in mind that what we are concerned with is the real world of to-day indeed, and not some imagined ideal world, but the duty of the *christian* living in that world, and not simply the duty of a citizen whose only end is the terrestrial and material advantage of his country. The christian's place is in the world; to stress the *de facto* tension in which he is forced to live is not to deny the christian's duty to the society in which he lives. We shall have to beware of the simplification which views christian duty as something essentially, exclusively, other-worldly; such a simplification leads to the denial of all material

¹ N. Berdyaev, *War and the Christian Conscience*, pp. 8-9.

means whatsoever. We shall have to beware equally of the simplification which forgets the other-worldly elements in christianity in an effort to do justice to the loyalty of the christian as citizen of an earthly kingdom. But, above all, we shall have to beware of the simplification which contents itself with examining ends apart from means, or, for that matter, means apart from end. *Bonum ex integra causa*, as the scholastics expressed it : a thing is good only if it is integrally good, good in all its elements. We shall not content ourselves with discovering that there is still something worth fighting for ; since the essence of the problem consists in understanding in what sense we may legitimately speak of fighting at all. We shall not content ourselves with discovering whether there are legitimate methods of fighting ; because the essence of the problem consists also in understanding for what objects it is permissible to fight at all.

It is not idle sentimentality, but hard common sense, to say that what our world stands most in need of is a change of heart. The Pact of Paris outlawed war ; we know how much we have benefited. Is there a rational explanation for so hopeless a failure ? It is surely this : that it is useless to outlaw the means unless we also outlaw the ends which make the use of those means inevitable. It is useless to outlaw war unless we are ready to outlaw injustice and greed. Let us not delude ourselves by thinking that any one nation can be held exclusively responsible for this breakdown of reason and law. Are we in this country guiltless ? Even with regard to the methods of warfare, it was Great Britain which abstained from the Protocol of Geneva of 1925, prohibiting the use of poison gas and bacteria. And with regard to ends, we cannot say

that we have outlawed war with anything more than our lips unless we are really ready to remove the causes of war by removing injustice, and by refusing to make the good of the world as a whole subordinate to the interests of our own economic advantage or political prestige. That is why a really christian examination of the problem of war must go beyond a casuist application of isolated texts to isolated facts, and must penetrate to the heart of things. It is no use discussing poison gas or the bombing of civil populations unless we are also ready to discuss the barbarism of spirit which lies behind them. 'The consciences of men must be mobilized against the horrors of total war. But let us not delude ourselves. We shall not put an end to this shame unless we put an end to the barbarism of which it is the expression, that barbarism which corrupts the soul of humanity and unleashes all the demons of hell in a proud and dechristianized world. There is no security against air warfare, against the warfare of gas, electricity, bacteria, and the rest, except in abolishing war. That terrible prayer of the psalmist which Pope Pius XI recalled to us so many times, *Dissipa gentes quae bella volunt* (Destroy the peoples who wish for war), will end by being literally accomplished. Nothing will save us from the catastrophe but an awakening of the souls and consciences of christians, an awakening which must be much more than a vague sentimentality. We must be ready to take our christianity seriously, ready to follow everywhere the Christ, the crucified Prince of Peace.'¹ It is only against the background of that recognition of what christianity means, the background of spiritual

¹ *Le Bombardement des Villes Ouvertes* (Collection *Qu'en Pensez-Vous?* Editions du Ceif), p. 46.

absolutes, and not of unprincipled compromise—the kind of compromise that compromises Christ, that we shall be able to see the problem truly in its entirety, and hope to judge it adequately and without violence to truth.

II

LAW AND FORCE

THE christian is not an anarchist. He is enjoined to 'render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's,' in other words, to recognize that he has duties towards the society of which he is a member. Christian tradition regards the evolution of the nation as a natural growth, and the laws which govern the relation of individual to society as a part of natural law. The post-Reformation history of Europe is the history of the acceleration and consummation of a tendency to minimize, and finally to abolish, the idea of the duty of the individual to serve society. Liberalist-individualism is the creed of the political egoist. It has been succeeded in our own day by theories which go to the opposite extreme ; and abolish the rights of the individual person by subordinating him entirely to the state. The catholic position bids us avoid both these extremes. What is of ultimate importance is the human personality in its relation to God ; but this does not exclude the rights of society against the individual, the duty of the individual to serve society.

'In the plan of the Creator,' wrote Pope Pius XI, 'society is a natural means which man can and must use to reach his destined end. Society is for man and not man for society. This, however, must not be understood in the sense of liberalist-individualism, which

subordinates society to the selfish use of the individual ; but only in the sense that by means of an organic union with society and by mutual collaboration, the attainment of earthly happiness is placed within the reach of all.¹ To-day, just as the happiness of individuals is to be attained only through their collaboration in national societies, so the well-being of those societies themselves depends upon their collaboration in the unity of the whole human family. The duty of the individual to serve the nation is paralleled by the duty of the nation to serve the world.

‘The human race, which forms but a single family as a result of the unity of its origin, appears, when examined, to be subject to the influence of a two-fold movement of decentralization and integration. The first of these movements, due to the multiplying of the species and its progressive diffusion over the surface of the earth, tends to break up the human race into groups ever more diversified according to the influence of environment and climate. The second movement, based on man’s natural sociability, prevents humanity from breaking up into individual atoms, quite distinct the one from the other, as is the case with most of the animal species. On the contrary it tends progressively to renew in individuals and groups the natural bonds of solidarity which have too great a tendency to loosen, and to reconstitute the indestructible unity of the human family hidden beneath the rich mosaic of racial variations and national peculiarities.’ With the growth of population the family or patriarchal group evolves, in order to satisfy ‘fresh needs and . . . wider horizons of cultural progress’ into the political society of city or state. But this in turn is not the final stage of evolu-

¹ *Dwini Redemptionis*, section 29.

tion. 'The common good which a nation, left to its own resources, can hope to bestow on its members is very limited.' For its material needs and for its cultural well-being it needs 'to be enriched by foreign contacts.'¹

So it is that the natural society of nations is formed ; and its formation is hastened and strengthened by the christian doctrine of the brotherhood of men. Like any other society, the society of nations must be governed by law in the interests of the common good of humanity ; and in a rational world it would be sufficient to state those laws, to agree upon necessary conventions. But we live in a world which is not obedient to reason ; and laws are broken. We need, then, for the well-being of the natural society of nations some method of enforcing obedience to international law corresponding to the function of a police force in enforcing national law. This was clearly stated by Pope Benedict XV in his Peace Message ; and is incorporated in the Covenant of the League. But as the history of the League tragically shows, though the world stands in urgent need of organization as an international society, it was not in fact ready to make the necessary sacrifice of the selfish pursuit of national ends. The world is a material unity ; it is not willing to become a formal, spiritual unity. What, then, is to become of international law ? We are driven back to the old and far more dangerous stage of world evolution in which each state reserves to itself the right of self-defence.

That right of self-defence cannot be denied. If we admit, as we must, that the natural evolution of human society into nations is according to God's providence ;

¹ Cf. Père A. Muller, S.J., 'The Organization of International Society,' in *The Foundations of International Order* (C.S.G.), p. 56.

if we admit that the nations, even though not yet formally united into an organized society, are at least bound to one another by laws derived from the natural law ; if further we admit, as the facts compel us to do, that those laws will not be respected unless they can in some way be enforced ; then we are obliged to admit the legitimacy of self-defence on the part of each nation, when its existence is threatened. In other words, we are bound to admit that the use of force, the use of war, can be justified.

We are here at the first of our dilemmas. Let us contrast the conclusion reached with the conclusions drawn by two different lines of thought, both of them to be met with fairly frequently to-day. The first argues that the use of force at all, in any circumstances, is foreign to the spirit of the Gospel, and therefore a treachery to christianity. Now it is true that our Lord's personality and teaching are very far removed from violence, and that the idea of forgiveness of injuries rather than forcible redress is clearly enjoined. But it is fatal to expect in the Gospels a direct answer to every problem, for it means wrenching a saying or an action from its proper context in order to apply it arbitrarily to another. Our Lord did not attempt to deal with every conceivable human situation, and to provide us with a ready-to-hand rule with which to deal with it. In particular, we should notice two things. First, He gave us a clear idea of the sort of behaviour He expects of His followers as individuals : He did not concern Himself with the duties of the heads of states, who act as such, not as individuals, but as guardians of their peoples. It is one thing to say that the individual should suffer violence gladly ; it is quite another to say that he should deliver over to

violence those he is responsible for guarding and protecting. Secondly, it is true that our Lord is very far from doing violence to those who attack Him ; but there is a good deal of violence in His denunciations of those who oppress the poor, the innocent. If we are to argue that the use of force can never be justified, then we must be prepared to hold that lawless violence must be allowed to do what it will with the poor and the innocent nation. But for the catholic there is another, and definitive, answer to this line of argument. It is that for us the teaching of Christ does not end with the Gospels in the sense that there is no one to explain to us what the Gospels mean in relation to the changing circumstances of life. On the contrary, we believe that the voice of Christ lives on in the voice of His Church and its tradition ; and we look to that authority, therefore, as we should look to the authority of Christ Himself. In this respect the teaching of tradition is clear : it is right that law should be defended ; and if there is no other way it is right that it should be defended by force. We shall find, however, that the apparent chasm of disparity between our idea of the Gospel and our idea of war is due to the fact that we tend to think of war simply in terms of war as we know it. The sort of war which is the instrument of human greed and human cruelty is indeed far from the spirit of the Gospel, because it is not the defence but the abrogation of law. That is not the sort of war which catholic tradition asserts to be compatible with christianity.

The second line of thought argues that war must be both barbarous and futile. And it is easy to convince oneself, by reading any adequate statement of this line of argument, that nothing could be more

quixotic than to look for the establishment of justice and the preservation of law from the use of armed force to-day. But again, it is necessary to distinguish. We are not at the moment concerned with specifically modern war, or indeed with any particular type of war ; but with the use of force in general. If a use of force can be found which is not in fact sub-human, or barbarous, or futile, such as the police force within the nation, then the argument falls. And it is precisely with such a use of force that we have been concerned.

For what immediately emerges from the foregoing considerations is that, whatever further qualifications we may have to add later, at any rate no war can be regarded as legitimate which is not itself governed by law, and directed by sound rational principles. Law cannot be established by lawlessness. Justice cannot be enforced by lawlessness. Society can indeed be temporarily organized by lawlessness, in the sense that an order can be temporarily imposed upon it ; but it cannot become organic ; and the end of all international effort is to ensure that the world shall become not organized merely but organic.

In other words, the conclusion that may be drawn so far is that force is legitimate, but not violence. When force is used in a manner, or to achieve an end, that violates law, it becomes violence. And violence is, by the first principles of christian sociology, excluded.

This means that we can exclude, once and for all, a great deal of warfare from the sphere of the legitimate. This we shall have occasion to discuss in detail in the following chapter. But we can also exclude a great deal of militarist theorizing ; and this point may be dealt with at once.

The romantic idea of war can have no place in a

civilized and christian society. It is based on falsehood, and puts falsehood at a premium. Civilized society does not go lightheartedly to war because the uniforms are so prettily coloured, or the military bands so thrilling. That is a mark of primitive society ; which delights in display, and in the use of force for its own sake, irrespective of the object against which the force is used. There is nothing romantic about war to-day ; and it is evidence alike of the power of propaganda and of the ability of human beings to close their eyes to realities that it should still be possible to think that there is. For the civilized man, war is simply the last repellent resort when all civilized means have failed. He will accept it therefore as he would accept any other unwelcome but necessary task ; but he will refuse to shroud its realities in a mist of false pageantry ; and he will refuse to surrender his personality to the de-personalizing influences which it may unleash.

Civilized society will not admit the notion that war is a biological necessity. To be civilized means precisely to have achieved control of the instincts. The aggressive instincts which may indeed find an outlet in war, need not do so ; and it is part of the evolution of the human personality to ensure that they shall not. War is only permissible, we remind ourselves, as an instrument rationally employed for the enforcing of law ; that result cannot be achieved by a war which is simply a sub-human surrender to uncontrolled biological urges.

The days have gone by when war might be extolled as the sport of kings. Yet something analogous is to be seen in the readiness of a ruler to plunge his people into war in order to distract them from difficulties at home, or to provide them with an opportunity for increasing their self-esteem or curing their defeatism. Such use

of force against another people is equally an outrage against the very idea of law.

Finally, we are faced to-day with a recrudescence of the very antithesis of civilization, the essence of barbarism: the phenomenon which has come to be called the *mystique* of force. This 'considers the whole quest for truth, the searching of spirit through thesis and antithesis, as the result of sterile liberalism which poisons people. It is reason that creates divisions; it is rational abstraction, both in the speculative and in the juridical order, that stultifies man and life. . . . Fascism goes still farther. It teaches youth to confound rationalism with intelligence and spirituality, so much so that the legitimate reaction against bourgeois rationalism leads youth to mistrust all use of intelligence in the directing of its conduct, and in the name of "realism" to assign all jurisdiction over universal spiritual values to the government. . . . So brutal a reaction of obscure forces need not be matter for astonishment after the long and gloomy decadence of bourgeois idealism. One might understand its extravagances, if these were only temporary. But there is grave danger that these instincts will develop into a permanent system. We are witnessing the birth, unknown to its authors, of a new rationalism more crude than the old. For it is possible to construct a system out of instinctive elements just as well as out of rational elements; and the former are no less artificial, less rigid, or less inhuman.'¹

We should not suppose that this temper of mind is confined to countries other than our own. On the

¹ Emmanuel Mounier, *A Personalist Manifesto*, pp. 31, 34, discussing fascism in the sense, not of the regime which arose in Italy in 1922, but of the ideology which has arisen in the post-War period, and which is expounded in its purest form by certain of the nazi theorists.

contrary. There is a very real danger that the habit we have inherited of thinking of politics as in practice at least a completely autonomous science may easily lead us to surrender to greater or less extent to a *mystique* of force without recognizing that it is fundamentally anti-christian because fundamentally anti-spiritual. Christianity affirms the primacy of the spiritual, and therefore the primacy of law in international life. War which is the product simply of obedience to irrational instinct, of irrational mysticism, cannot enter into the christian scheme of things.

It may be well to repeat that the same is true of war which is the product simply of political expediency. If one speaks to-day of the laws which govern war, one is liable to be understood as meaning the laws of ballistics or strategy ; it is forgotten sometimes that those laws can only tell us how to wage war effectively, not when to wage war, or if to wage war, or how to wage war justly. The sciences, in the christian view, are simply the servants of ethics : telling us how to do effectively what ethics tells us we may do or ought to do. Because man is not spirit but body-spirit, the right ordering of life includes the right use and ordering of material things. But to use material things is not to judge materialistically. To use force on occasion is licit ; but to judge the use of force by materialist criteria is not licit.

We return, then, to the idea of personality. ‘ Society is for man, and not *vice versa*.’ The whole organization of society, national and international, the whole complexus of the laws which govern that society and outline the structure of the terrestrial order, are intended simply to enable the person to live as fully as possible the good life in order as perfectly as possible

to worship God. That is the ultimate criterion of all political problems. To put the same thing in another way, the terrestrial order must be subservient to, and expressive of, the absolutes, justice, charity, truth. The only permissible war, in the christian view, is that which is necessary for the defence of absolutes, and which in its waging is itself consonant with those absolutes. It will be the task of the succeeding chapters to discover if, or when, in these days, war can be regarded as fulfilling those conditions.

III

THE JUST INITIATION OF WAR

TRADITIONAL christian teaching on the subject of war affirms that before a war may legitimately be entered upon three conditions must be fulfilled : a proper authority, a just cause, a right intention. In laying down those conditions, christian thinkers have done no more than elucidate the general principle we have been considering : that war can only be justified when it is governed by law and waged in defence of law. This becomes clear if we examine the three conditions in detail.

A Proper Authority

It is clear that the initiation of war outside of, or in defiance of, the authority which alone has power to defend the rights of the nation is not a legitimate use of force, but an illegitimate use of violence. Law cannot be enforced lawlessly ; and society is organized precisely that the authority necessary for the enforcing of law may be vested in a sovereign power. We have seen already that while ideally there should be to-day an international authority, wielding international force for the preservation of law, in fact the nations of the world have proved themselves insufficiently civilized to make this possible, and the power of self-defence, and therefore in general of defending law, by force of

arms reverts to the sovereigns of the national states. This condition, then, is not of great practical importance for us so far as international war is concerned. It is, however, of importance where civil war is concerned ; and for that reason should be considered.

The principle is plain enough. Civil authority is based upon, and circumscribed by, law : if the sovereign violates that law to the extent of abrogating fundamental natural rights, he ceases to be a sovereign and becomes a tyrant : the basis of his authority is destroyed, and the task of defending law devolves upon the nation as a whole. In practice, however, it is singularly difficult to say at what precise point tyranny destroys authority. That is why the Church bids us continue to recognize an existing government as such until it is clear beyond all cavil that it has ceased to exercise proper authority, rather than rush prematurely to the conclusion that rebellion is legitimate. This point of view was expressed very clearly by the Spanish episcopate in December, 1934. ' The Church, guardian of a conception of political sovereignty that is the highest and the most righteous of all, since it emanates from God, who is the origin and foundation of all authority, never fails to inculcate the respect and obedience due to constituted authority, even should its trustees and representatives abuse their power by acting against her. . . . However distressing may be the circumstances into which the Church is plunged, do not claim to take the vengeance which belongs to the Lord alone ; remember that the Church conquers evil with good, that she answers iniquity with justice, outrage with gentleness, ill-treatment with good offices, and, finally, bear in mind that the christian doctrine of suffering is likewise a power for victory. To co-operate, through

your conduct, in the destruction of the social order, hoping that a better state of things may be born from the catastrophe, would be a reprehensible attitude which, by its fatal consequences, would practically constitute a treason against your religion and against your country.'

Pope Pius XI, in his letter to the Mexican Bishops of March, 1937, gives a definitive statement. 'You have more than once reminded your flock,' he writes, 'that the Church promotes peace and order even at the cost of great sacrifices to herself, and that she condemns every unjust rebellion or act of violence against the properly constituted civil power. On the other hand, you have also affirmed that if the case arose where the civil power should so trample on justice and truth as to destroy even the very foundations of authority, there would appear no reason to condemn citizens for uniting to defend the nation and themselves by lawful and appropriate means against those who make use of the power of the state to drag the nation to ruin. Although it is true that the practical solution depends on concrete circumstances, it is nevertheless our duty to remind you of some general principles which must always be kept in mind, namely :

1. That the methods used for vindicating these rights are means to an end, or constitute a relative end, not a final and absolute end ;

2. That, as means to an end, they must be lawful and not intrinsically evil acts ;

3. That since they should be means proportionate to the end, they must be used only in so far as they serve to attain that end, in whole or in part, and in such a way that they do not bring greater harm to the community than the harm they were intended to remedy.'

I have quoted this papal document the more readily in that it not only elucidates the immediate question under discussion, but also underlines the christian conception of force as subject always to law, and by its emphasis on the necessity of ensuring the lawfulness of means as well as end, and preventing evils worse than those which it is intended to remedy, anticipates a great deal of what remains to be said in later chapters.

It will be noted that the Pope in this letter, dealing as he is with a particular set of circumstances, a single definite issue, nevertheless confines himself to a statement of general principles. The reason is important. It is sometimes argued that the Pope ought to make a clear and definitive decision, either about war in general—catholics may, or may not, take part in war; or about each particular war—this nation is in the wrong, and therefore catholics may not fight for her. Such an argument arises from a misunderstanding of the Church's mission, and of the scope of the teaching authority of the Pope. The Church speaks with the authority of Christ when it speaks of faith or morals. War is a moral question, certainly; but, as we have seen, the Church cannot forbid war absolutely because it holds that the use of force in defence of law *may* be not only licit but necessary; and it cannot say without reservation that catholics may take part in war, for war may be unjust. And the question whether this or that use of force is morally justifiable is not simply a moral question. It depends on a whole complexus of political causes and effects, a set of facts: it depends on whether this or that nation did or did not commit this or that crime against international justice, will or will not use certain methods of warfare, has or has not certain motives in going to war. On all these things the Church,

in the person of the Pope, is indeed competent to speak with authority, for it would be difficult to find any other arbiter at once so detached and objective, and so well informed. But it would be human authority, not divine. The Pope cannot force his arbitration upon an unwilling nation ; the days of christendom, the days when the papal authority was admitted, are over. While then he may give clearer definitions of the morality of ends and means in relation to modern probabilities ; and while he for the whole Church, and bishops for their own subjects, can guide the christian conscience in a particular case, it remains true that the proper authority in the initiation of war remains the state, even if it be a pagan state ; it is for the christians of each country to decide for themselves, by making as well-informed and impartial a judgement as they can, whether in a given case the state is right or wrong.

A Just Cause

It is not enough that war should be legally initiated by the authority of the state. The christian cannot say ‘ My country right or wrong ’, because he acknowledges an authority higher than that of Cæsar. Equally he cannot say ‘ My country is bound to be right ’. It is sometimes argued that he can, even by catholics. The individual, they will urge, cannot expect to know all the facts, and therefore cannot hope to make a judgement which will take account of all the facts ; he is bound, therefore, to accept the judgement of those who do know the facts. The argument is very dangerous, and very unsound. It is true that the individual finds it hard to acquire certain knowledge of all the facts ; and therefore, if he has no certain knowledge of facts which clearly show the position of

his country to be unjustifiable, he is well advised to accept the judgement of his rulers. That is the traditional position. But the condition is of vital importance. It is more than likely, in these days of propaganda and counter-propaganda, that the individual will not find himself in full and certain possession of all the facts ; the point is that if he finds himself in possession of one single fact which invalidates his country's position, he is bound to judge that position unjustifiable, and to act accordingly. That a war may be just, *all* the facts must prove it just ; but a war is unjust if any one fact is sufficient to prove it unjust. The christian cannot resign his conscience into the keeping of his rulers.

What is a just cause for war? Vitoria answers : *Unica est et sola causa iusta inferendi bellum : iniuria accepta*. The one and only just cause for initiating war is injustice suffered by one state from another. He is restating the conclusion we have already reached : that war can only be justified if and when it is employed to defend law ; for offensive war (of which he is speaking) and defensive are alike in this—if they are just—that they are concerned to oppose injustice, either already committed, or now being committed. It is, of course, presupposed that war is the last resort ; every other means of righting the wrong must have been tried ; and it is worth noting that the world to-day has all the machinery necessary for impartial arbitration, if only it will make use of it.

Of the morality of offensive war, that is, of the morality of unleashing war upon the world, little need be said. In the first place, we in this country are not likely to find ourselves involved in anything but a defensive war. In the second place, the issue is hardly in

doubt. It is only necessary to remind ourselves of the words of Pius XI, quoted above, that forcible means must not be employed if they will 'bring greater harm to the community than the harm they were intended to remedy', and to apply that principle to the community of nations. Moreover, moral theology may be said to have established the conclusion that the only justifiable war to-day is that of legitimate defence against unjust aggression. This was the finding of an international congress of theologians at Fribourg ; and it is supported by the authority of Cardinals Faulhaber and Verdier and the Bishop of Berlin. On the other hand, it is well to note that the distinction between offensive and defensive wars is not always in practice a clear one. A nation may be driven, by aggressive methods other than war on the part of its neighbours, to a state of crisis for which it is forced to seek a remedy in desperate measures. It is conceivable, at least, that a nation may be forced to war if it is to live. Is such a war to be called offensive ? Is it not rather precisely a defence of the most fundamental of rights, the right to live ? That line of thought is important because a christian, called upon to defend his country, must be sure first of all that the aggression is really an unprovoked aggression. If the attack is due simply to the selfish greed, and therefore the infringement of law, of the nation now called upon to defend itself, this latter cannot validly describe its resort to arms as a defence of justice and of law. Both sides in a conflict may be wrong. It is wrong to commit aggression ; it may be equally wrong to resist the demands which cause the aggression. It is very difficult, in the intricate maze of past history and the complexities of the political present, to say where injustice begins.

The general practical conclusion would seem to be that we should do everything that lies in our power to ensure that legitimate grievances are heard, legitimate demands satisfied, without loss of time, that our consciences may, on that score at least, be clear.

We cannot then say off-hand that if our interests are attacked we are in a morally unassailable position when we take up arms to defend ourselves. There are other factors to be considered. It may be that one party in a given dispute is wholly right, the other wholly wrong. It is far more likely, in practice, that both sides will be partly right and partly wrong. We should not forget, in the first place, the influences which make for war, and which we may be serving if we go to war. The extent to which financial influences are active in provoking conflict, at least demands consideration ; the marxist argument that all imperialist war is, in fact, war in defence of capitalism, is a simplification which should nevertheless be taken into account ; the fomenting of war by marxism itself, as the shortest road to world revolution, cannot be forgotten. We might find ourselves, while ostensibly engaged, or indeed really engaged, in the defence of freedom and democracy, fighting side by side with strange allies, allies who, themselves anti-christian, should look to the war to secure them very different results. If we are faced, then, for example, with a call for defence against an attack upon ourselves or our allies, there are certain questions which we are bound to ask ourselves before we can say without qualification that our cause is just. To what extent have we forced the attacker's hand ? Have we perhaps driven him to what is tantamount to a defence of his right to live ? To what extent has the war been engineered by the upholders of an

ideology of Right or Left? To what extent has it been engineered by financial influences? To what extent is the justification for the war—defence against direct aggression—qualified by other aims which are less easily defensible? These questions will not decide the issue, necessarily; the presence of unjust causes side by side with a cause that is just, does not necessarily mean that the war as a whole must be condemned; but at least it is necessary to be on one's guard. For the gravest injury can be done to the Church, the gravest scandal caused, by an indiscriminate support of a cause in which good and evil causes combine.

A Right Intention

The third condition is the one which sets the gravest difficulty in the way of justifying war to-day. A right intention is defined by St. Thomas as meaning the intention that 'good be promoted and evil avoided'. Promoted, avoided, for whom?

Bella geri debent pro bono communi, says Vitoria: the object of the sovereign in going to war should be to promote the common good. But the common good changes as society evolves. Where the organization of society is such that the affairs and actions of one nation do not affect the rest, there will be no need for the sovereign to look further than the good of his own people. But where society has so far evolved that all the nations are affected by the affairs of each, the case is different. The common good of humanity as a whole has to be taken into consideration. 'Christian philosophy has long been familiar with the concept of an international social life whose outline St. Augustine was the first to draw and which was developed after his time by St. Thomas, Vitoria, Suarez

and many others ; yet secular thought . . . for long remained antagonistic to these opinions. Princes adopted selfish State reasons as the norm of their policy. . . . In spite of this, the facts have ended by overcoming even the most hardened prejudices. . . . To-day the order and prosperity of each nation is indissolubly bound to the order and prosperity of the rest.' 'To what other conclusion can we come than that the claims of modern States are unjustifiable and that there does not exist, nor can there exist, complete independence and absolute sovereignty for the State? As members of a natural society of nations they are under a positive duty to make their contribution to the good of the community. . . . In case of need they are in duty bound to subordinate and even to sacrifice their individual interests to this common good.' 'Such is the catholic teaching regarding international life together with the duties it imposes on the various States. . . . Catholics must accustom themselves to consider the weighty problems of to-day in the light of these principles.'¹

In waging war, then, the common good of the entire world has to be taken into account. For, as Vitoria declares, a province forms part of a State, a State forms part of the world. If it should happen that a war is justifiable in a single province or State but will entail great evil on the world at large or on christendom in general such war becomes unjust (Vitoria : *Relectio de Potestate Civili*, 13). The argument of the 'common good' is of such weight that any war fulfilling all the other conditions of justification

¹ Père A. Müller, S.J. : 'The Organization of International Society,' in *The Foundations of International Order* (C.S.G.), pp. 60, 65, 68.

and lacking this would be, according to the theologians, unlawful.¹

It is not, then, for the individual nation merely that 'good must be promoted and evil avoided.'

The common good of the world is the ultimate criterion of political action. There is a right intention, therefore, only if war will promote good and avoid evil for the world as a whole. This is expressed in the principle laid down by Pope Pius XI, already quoted, that the use of force must not bring greater harm to the community than the harm it is intended to remedy. The question to be asked, then, is simply this : Can a war to-day fail to bring greater harm to the community—in this case the community of nations—than that which it is designed to remedy ?

It is necessary to emphasize the fact that it is the good of the world, and not merely of the individual nation, that is in question, because it is a fact which is neglected in a prevalent line of argument. It is often urged that the immense destruction and damage wrought by modern war is not in fact an argument against its moral permissibility, for it may be a duty to fight, and one cannot refuse a duty for the sake of escaping physical evils, one cannot compare the physical with the moral. This line of argument makes three false assumptions. In the first place, it assumes that the evil wrought by war to-day is exclusively physical evil. Unhappily, this is not true. That de-personalization already alluded to which is associated with modern war is a moral evil. The decay of ideals, which modern war brings in its train, is a moral evil. The decay of faith is a moral evil. The direct killing of non-combatants is a moral evil. There is the vast wave

¹ Honorio Muñoz, O.P. : *Vitoria and War*, p. 91.

of crime which war brings in its train to be considered. Finally, we shall not, if we are wise, look for justice as the fruit of modern war. The atmosphere of hate which modern propaganda arouses does not dispose the mind to a just impartiality in the drawing up of treaties ; it merely prolongs that process which Benedict XV described as the 'passing down from generation to generation of the mournful heritage of hatred and revenge.' That, again, is a moral evil.

The second false assumption is that war to-day affects only the combatant nations. It is true that a small localized squabble in Europe may not much affect the inhabitants of Chile or Peru. But squabbles in Europe to-day are only with difficulty prevented from spreading, even when, like the war in Spain, they are properly the internal concern of a single state. Moreover, a conflict between any of the great powers will certainly affect the greater part of the nations of the world, even though they are not drawn into the actual conflict, by the economic dislocation which it produces. A nation, then, which takes up arms to-day cannot legitimately argue that the evils which the war will bring will be confined to its enemy, who has deserved them, and itself, who is willing to suffer them. To cause dislocation and distress, unless they are unavoidable, to the greater part of the world is a moral evil.

Nor is it always true—and this is the third false assumption—that physical evils are irrelevant. It is often, in fact, necessary precisely to choose between two physical evils. If the cause of the war is a particular wrong done to a particular nation, and not the threat of the triumph of evil over the world ; if, in other words, the war would be, from the point of view of the

wronged nation, simply self-regarding, then it would be a question for that nation of choosing between the physical evils of war and those of refraining from war. Among the former it would have to consider the economic evils, the biological evils, the cultural losses, the probable political changes for the worse; and again it would have to consider these as affecting in degree not only itself but the nations of the world.

The Czechoslovakian crisis of September, 1938, is a case in point. The German Government, whether its claims were justified or not, or in what degree, had put itself in the wrong by its methods. There could be no doubt that an invasion, in the circumstances in which it was, in fact, threatened in September, would have been an unjust act of aggression. The corollary is that to take up arms in self-defence would have been justified. But the effects of that action had to be considered. What would have been the result for Czechoslovakia itself? Presumably, a destruction more or less complete; in other words, even greater harm than could come of surrender to the demands being made upon it. But, as Vitoria expresses it, 'no war is just if the harm to the state exceeds the benefit or the advantage, even if in other respects titles and reasons for the justice of the war are not lacking.' And what would have been the result for the world? That was the question which had to be the final criterion. 'For inasmuch as . . . wars ought only to be waged for the common good, if some one city cannot be recaptured without greater evils befalling the commonweal, such as the devastation of many great cities, great slaughter of human beings, provocations of princes and occasions of new wars to the destruction of the Church . . . it is inclubitable that the prince is

bound rather to give up his own rights and abstain from war.' It is hard to make the sacrifice of one's own property, power, advantage, for the sake of the common good ; and in a world governed by greed and egoism must no doubt seem quixotic ; yet it has been suggested that perhaps the world is waiting just for some such act of sacrifice, for a ' Christ-nation,' to redeem it from its vicious circle of injury and counter-injury and mutual hatred and distrust.

The necessity of suffering the less evil to avoid the greater, and of looking always to the common good of the world, is the justification for the Munich agreement. It is interesting, however, to recall the warning given by Mr. Chamberlain in the House of Commons, that if it were to be a question of a nation attempting to dominate the world ' by fear of its force,' then it would be necessary to resist. For that is clearly a possibility which theology also must consider. If it is a question, not of suffering a particular wrong, but of allowing the triumph of evil, then indeed it must be asked whether any accumulation of evils, not for one nation alone but for the world, can be set against it and outweigh it. One is not here thinking of the slogans which are employed to give almost any war an idealist ring : the defence of democracy, of culture, and so forth. As a ' reasonable prospect of success ' is a condition of the just rebellion (for otherwise it is clear that more harm will in fact come of the rebellion than that it is intended to remedy), so a similar proviso attends the waging of a just war. There is no reasonable prospect of success in a war waged for the preservation of democracy if the war is to end in ' anarchy and world revolution.' And what of culture ? ' How can the destiny of a culture depend on the issue of a battle ? ' In point of fact, subjugated

Greece triumphed over its subjugator ; and Rome in its turn, submerged by the barbarians, imposed on its invaders its laws, its customs, its language, its genius. If cultural differences must result in a conflict, and a triumph of one way of thought over the other, this must evidently be by way of a dialectical process, not by military measures. Because we have different ways of viewing the world we must fight one another—what a method ! Let us be left in peace, to meditate, to create, compare, exchange our fruits. Culture is not the prize of battle ; it must not be made the pretext.’¹

On the other hand, it has to be remembered that success does not necessarily mean material success : there is the success which attends the death of the martyr. ‘A higher obligation—that of respecting one’s plighted word, of defending the higher values of religion and civilization, etc.—may sometimes lead to choosing an heroic defeat instead of an inglorious capitulation.’² Even so, the guiding thought in such a case would have to be ultimately, not the destiny of the individual nation alone, but the good of the world as a whole.

It remains that a nation might seek to destroy, once and for all, the legal basis of the life of the world, to substitute force for law. That is the ultimate dilemma to which these considerations lead us, a dilemma from which there is no easy issue. It is difficult, of course, to say whether such an act of barbarism would, in fact, destroy the structure of world society once and for all. Regimes are transitory. The possibility of a peaceful recuperation from the effects of such an act

¹ Pierre-Henri Simon, *Discours sur la Guerre Possible*, pp. 29–30.

² *Code of International Ethics* (C.S.G.), p. 78.

would have to be taken into account. All the considerations which have been put forward here would still have to be borne in mind. But if a case were to arise in which the issue were substantially clear, the cause of law not substantially altered by baser motives ; in which the threat were clearly a threat to the world, and to the world's most vital interest, its spiritual structure ; in which the world were virtually unanimous as to the justice, and the necessity, of resistance—and the world means more than the governments of the nations ; in which it were certain that recovery could not be looked for in other methods of resistance or recuperation ; finally, in which the issue would certainly be not temporary but lasting ; then it would be difficult to resist the conclusion that war in such a case would be a duty, *provided* it could be waged without injustice either in its methods or in its results. That proviso, however, is essential for us to-day ; and it is to the detailed discussion of it that we have to turn in the following chapter.

Before we go on to that discussion it may be well to attempt a summary of what has been said in the form of conclusions, though it is dangerous, for the subject is still an unreal one—war to-day in abstraction from the methods of to-day ; and it is all but impossible to think of war, and certainly impossible to imagine it, apart from its methods. A great part of the argument as to greater or less harm done by war depends on the consideration of method ; and therefore to judge the issue at this stage is to pre-judge it. Nevertheless, there are certain principles which seem to suggest themselves by way of conclusion.

1. In the case of an aggression the aim of which is complete extermination or complete destruction of

independence, while the heroism which should sacrifice the right of defence in the interests of the world might well constitute precisely that colossal act of charity which would turn the world from its folly, such an act of sacrifice would go beyond the limits of what could be demanded in justice. The right of a nation to live, and to live its own life, is inalienable.

2. If a nation finds itself called upon to defend another nation which is unjustly attacked, and to which it is bound by treaty, then it is bound to fulfil its obligations. The dishonouring of international obligation is precisely the fundamental crime against international society. It may, however, be its right, and even its duty, to try to persuade the victim of aggression to avoid the ultimate evil of a general conflict by agreeing to terms less favourable than those which it can claim in justice, and which it might perhaps secure through war ; provided always that such a surrender of rights would not mean in fact a surrender once and for all to the rule of violence.

3. In the case of an aggression which, though perhaps small in itself, has as its final object the subjection of the world to the rule of violence, the imposition upon the world of an immoral philosophy of life, of paganism, a war which should really be a war for absolute values against that attempt would be justified and necessary ; for by definition it would be a war which, fought on an issue affecting the most vital spiritual values of the world as a whole, and supported therefore by the world as a whole, would fulfil equivalently the idea of sanctions as envisaged by christian tradition.

4. It is, of course, presupposed in all these cases (a) that every other means to compose the issue has been tried and failed ; (b) that war is therefore really

the last and the only resort if justice is to be done ; and (c) that the necessity of defending or restoring justice by force is clear, not only on a short view (unless there is war, injustice will be successful), but also on a long view (unless there is war, there is no prospect of justice being restored, in the reasonably near future, at all).

It must be added that if, as the first three conclusions suggest, a quarrel which does not explicitly involve the world may yet be justified, there must nevertheless be certain further qualifications. Perhaps one may be permitted to repeat here four points which one has suggested elsewhere¹ :

1. Since every war to-day necessarily affects the whole world, and is to that extent at least a world war, the world must be considered : if all the nations, or the vast majority, agree about the justice and the necessity of the action of a nation in making war, that nation will not be guilty of moral evil in regard to the losses suffered by the world.

2. Since every peace concluded at the end of a war is likely to be unjust, the main lines of a settlement should by previous agreement be left to a neutral international body. In practice, since on other grounds negotiation must have preceded military measures, some sort of settlement have been already suggested, and its justice acknowledged by world opinion, there should be a guarantee that the terms of the settlement will be adhered to and not overstepped.

3. As a corollary of the foregoing, there should be a previous guarantee that hostilities will not be used as a means to purely selfish advantage.

¹ In *The Commonwealth*, December 9, 1938.

4. Every means should be taken to ensure that the real issue is known to the people of the other side.

There is, then, if the foregoing conclusions are valid, still a place for war in the christian scheme of things, abstracting for the moment from the question of the way in which the war is waged. But that abstraction is one that cannot be made if the conclusions are to be definitive and realist. The christian—and this would seem to be the point so seldom adverted to, though it is the essence of the whole problem for the individual—the christian can say whether or no he thinks a given situation justifies the use of force ; but he cannot, normally at least, decide the form that use of force shall take. The ultimate problem, and the deepest anguish of mind, arise when the christian finds himself faced with a situation in which he is convinced that war is a duty, but the methods of war which will be used, a crime. That is the dilemma which we have now to discuss.

IV

THE JUST WAGING OF WAR

THE end does not justify the means. An action, no matter how good in itself, or how laudable the motive which prompts it, becomes bad if the means adopted to carry it out are evil. If recourse to war is justified because it is a vindication of rights, a defence of law and justice, still 'the methods used for vindicating these rights are means to an end,' and 'as means to an end, they must be lawful and not intrinsically evil.' Can it be said of any war to-day that its methods are 'lawful and not intrinsically evil'? That is the first question which must now be asked. The answer to it would seem to depend mainly on two things: the killing of civil populations, and propaganda. And it will be well to preface consideration of those points by a general *caveat*. The question is whether the methods adopted by those responsible for the waging of the war, as part of the general plan of campaign, are intrinsically evil: there is no question of crimes which are merely incidental and private. A war cannot be condemned as unjust in its methods because individual soldiers commit private crimes in the course of it; or because in excess of their orders they fight in ways that cannot be justified; or because events occur which are not intended by the leaders, even though if they were deliberately intended they would be sufficient to

condemn the war. The question concerns exclusively methods of warfare which are adopted deliberately by headquarters as part of the general campaign.

And he said to him : What hast thou done ? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth to me from the earth. The killing of the innocent is traditionally regarded as one of the sins which 'cry to heaven for vengeance'; and, in consequence, the deliberate killing of the innocent in warfare is traditionally regarded as one of the things which cannot be excused.

This leads us to a point of first importance for the whole problem of war as it concerns the moral theologian. It is sometimes argued that those who find it impossible or difficult to justify modern war are departing from christian tradition. That is an assumption : it cannot simply be stated ; it must be proved. The conclusions to which such thinkers come may be mistaken ; may in fact be irreconcilable with the established principles of christian tradition ; but as far at least as catholic theologians are concerned, their premisses are precisely those established principles. The proper task of the theologian is to apply established principles to the changing circumstances of life ; and the circumstances under which war is waged have changed. The matter has been put plainly by Cardinal Faulhaber. 'The teaching of moral theology,' he says, 'will speak a new language. It will remain true to its old principles, but in regard to the permissibility of war it will take account of the new facts.'

But again it is sometimes argued that, as far at least as methods of warfare are concerned, the facts to-day are not new, do not differ substantially from what has always been the case. This point was the subject of an interesting discussion in *The Times* in September, 1936.

Miss Rose Macaulay, for example, argued that there must sooner or later come a time in the evolution of the weapons of war at which 'we should draw the line, and say, "They are too barbarous for decent people to use against other people, for whatever purpose. . . . Whatever other nations may do, we, as human beings who value civilization, cannot sanction savagery such as this. If this is war, we can have no part or lot in it."' To this Mr. Wickham Steed replied : 'There is no intrinsic or moral difference between bows and arrows (arrows, perhaps, barbed and poisoned), "Greek fire," boiling oil, molten lead, and other weapons once employed, and mustard gas, phosgene, Lewisite, thermite bombs, flame-throwers, and similar modern weapons. To suppose that nations can be induced to fight out their quarrels with boxing gloves, if the method of settling claims or disputes by battle is to be retained, is surely chimerical ; and once "the gloves are off" there is no limit to what men will do.'

This reply seems to call for two comments. In the first place, while it is doubtless true that 'there is no limit to what men will do,' there is very definitely a limit to what men may do ; and the issue before the christian is whether what men will do in a war will prevent his participation in it. Secondly, the *kind* of difference between the old methods and the new is not, from the point of view of moral theology, primarily a matter of degree. Modern methods may or may not be more cruel and savage than the methods of former days ; that is not the point. Let it be supposed that they are considerably more humane : the essential difficulty remains. The essential difficulty is that the *objective* is different. It has always been held that the only licit objects of attack, as far as human beings are

concerned, are the combatants ; it has always been held that the slaughter of non-combatants could be excused only if it were, not *directa intentione*, not deliberate and directly willed, but *per accidens*, outside the intention of those directing operations. To-day, the civil population is the object of deliberate and directly willed attack.

It is, of course, possible to point to wars in the past in which the civil population were the object of direct and deliberate attack. The point is that such wars, judged according to traditional theological standards, were unjust. The wars of the past which were governed more or less by theological standards—more or less, for the practice of men is seldom on a complete parity with the requirements of morals—were wars between armies ; the sufferings of civilians were not directly willed by the leaders of the combatants ; they were occasioned by the carrying out of the direct objective ; and what is thus only indirectly willed does not, if certain conditions are fulfilled, constitute in traditional theology a crime. It may be added, to avoid the possibility of irrelevant dispute, that if, in fact, it were proved that no war had ever been waged in which the civil populations were not the object of direct attack, the essential fact would remain the same : such direct attack has always been condemned, and such attack is involved in modern warfare. Modern warfare is not warfare between two armies merely, or even, it would seem, primarily. The military authorities themselves subscribe to this view. Marshal Pétain has expressed it thus : ‘Henceforward the object of war appears in all its amplitude and all its cruel simplicity : it has become the destruction not of an army but of a nation.’ General von Altröck says the same thing :

'The next war will be much more an extermination *en masse* of the civil population than a fight between two armies.' Again, Major Sherman Miles: 'The objective of three-dimensional war is the non-combatant.'¹

Are we to suppose that we in this country should refrain from fulfilling these prophecies? In peace-time we are horrified when these crimes are perpetrated by others; we should forget our scruples if we were at war. We did forget our scruples during the last war. Sir Henry Wilson, British Military Representative, Supreme War Council, said on January 17, 1918: 'The policy intended to be followed is to attack the important German towns systematically. . . . It is intended to concentrate on one town for successive days and then to pass to several other towns, returning to the first town until the target is thoroughly destroyed, or, at any rate, until the morale of workmen is so shaken that output is seriously interfered with. . . . Long-distance bombing will produce its maximum moral effect only if the visits are constantly repeated at short intervals so as to produce in each area bombed a sustained anxiety.'² We should not under-estimate the effect upon our consciences of war psychosis.

It may be that such a course of action would be excused as legitimate reprisals. And it is easy to make out a popular case for the justice of returning savagery for savagery. Indeed, it is important to note that some such assumption is likely to be taken for granted. Thus, Sir Douglas Haig argued: 'The bombing of populous centres may also be justifiable, and may prove effective,

¹ Cf. *Le Bombardement des Villes Ouvertes*, p. 3.

² Cf. 'The Psychology of Bombing,' by Major-General J. F. C. Fuller (*The Spectator*, July 15, 1938).

in order to punish the enemy for similar acts previously committed by him, and to prevent their recurrence.’¹ Christian theology is more exigent. ‘If one of the parties indulges in practices forbidden by the accepted laws of war, the other is quite entitled to apply the law of retaliation, provided the acts of reprisal do not violate the natural law. But no violation of any prescription of positive law by one of the belligerents will ever entitle the other to free himself of all the laws of war and revert to the most cruel methods of primitive barbarism.’² The slaughter of the innocent is not a question of positive law, but of natural law; a reversion to primitive barbarism.

The overwhelming probability of such methods of warfare being used, then, throws a new light upon what was said in the preceding chapter on the legitimacy of defence. To what extent, it has to be asked, can a defensive war be simply a war of defence? It is the opinion of Lord Baldwin that ‘the only defence is offence, which means that you have to kill women and children more quickly than the enemy if you want to save yourselves.’ And, indeed, it is difficult to imagine that a war of defence would, in fact, be confined to strictly defensive measures if the enemy attack consisted of the mass slaughter of civilians.

But there is another argument which is sometimes advanced to justify the direct killing of civilians. In former times, it is urged, there was a clear-cut distinction between combatants and non-combatants. This is no longer the case. If a nation goes to war, the whole nation is concerned in the war, the whole nation plays

¹ Cf. Major-General Fuller, *art. cit.*

² *A Code of International Ethics* (C.S.G.), p. 80.

its part in carrying on the war ; nobody therefore can be considered as 'innocent' in the old theological sense, as a non-combatant.

There is truth in this contention. But in the first place, it is exaggerated. By no stretch of the imagination can babies in arms, young children, many women, the aged and the infirm, be said to be combatants. Yet it is on them that the brunt of air attack may fall. Secondly, while it may be conceded that 'it is now permissible for the just belligerent to attack the enemy in the vital elements of its economic structure : militarized factories, railways, ports, sources of raw materials, etc.,' yet it remains true that 'the mass murder rendered possible by chemical or bacteriological war must be judged quite differently. The extermination of entire populations, which are not given any time to show repentance, is obviously a dreadful crime against the laws of humanity.'¹ If the authority of theologians is not sufficient, there is the authority of the jurists to support it. In the code of laws drawn up by the international commission of jurists at The Hague in 1922 we read : 'Aerial bombardments destined to terrorize the civilian population, or to destroy or damage private property which has no military character, or to wound non-combatants, is prohibited. The bombardment of towns, hamlets, villages, inhabited houses or buildings which are not in the immediate neighbourhood of military operations is prohibited. In cases where the objectives specified in par. 2 [military depots, munition factories, lines of communication used for military purposes, etc.] are so situated that they cannot be bombarded without indiscriminate bombardment of the civil population,

¹ *Code of International Ethics*, p. 88.

the air force must refrain from bombardment.’¹ Ecclesiastical authority has spoken in the same sense. The Holy See has formally protested against the bombing of civil populations from the air; the *Osservatore Romano*, in its issue of June 10, 1938, declared that the protestations of the world against bombings in Spain were justified ‘by the fact that the centres bombed have no military interest.’ The attitude of the Holy See was echoed in an appeal issued by the Comité Français pour la Paix Civile et Religieuse, which read: ‘The methods of total war employed against non-combatants are a crime which no strategic reason can justify, and which dishonours the camp, whatever it is, that makes use of them. . . . If reasons of simple humanity suffice to condemn such a massacre of non-combatants, the massacre becomes, if possible, yet more revolting when the leaders responsible invoke the cause of christian civilization. . . . We raise a solemn protest against these methods; and we call on men of goodwill, and particularly on christians, to join their voices with ours.’

It was argued in the last chapter that if, as christians, we were to find ourselves faced with the necessity of fighting for christian principles, we should probably find ourselves embarrassed by allies who should join in the conflict for less worthy motives. To this has now to be added the danger of finding that in a fight for christianity methods would be used which were a treason to christianity. The argument would be the common-sense argument that we must either copy the methods of our enemies or perish. But christianity will not be content with this argument. There are things which no law of reprisals can excuse. ‘Christianity,’

¹ Quoted in *Le Bombardement des Villes Ouvertes*, p. 36.

in Maritain's phrase, 'will re-create itself by christian means, or it will perish completely.' We may not do evil that good may come.

It is necessary to emphasize, again and again, the danger of surrendering to fundamentally pagan criteria in political problems. Pope Pius XI, in his noble Letter, *Ubi Arcano*, which discusses the troubles left by the Great War, after remarking how applicable to our days were the words of the prophet: *We looked for peace and no good came; for a time of healing and behold fear. . . . We looked for light and behold darkness . . . for salvation and it is far from us*, goes on to examine the causes of the evils afflicting the world, and finds them in the human heart. 'Peace was indeed signed between the belligerents, but it was written in public documents, not in the hearts of men. . . . All know the words of Holy Scripture: *They that have forsaken the Lord shall be consumed. . . . Men have fallen away miserably from Jesus Christ, falling from their first happiness into a slough of misery, and that is the reason of the failure of all they do to repair the ills and save something from the wreck. God and the Lord Christ have been removed from the conduct of public affairs, authority is now derived not from God but from men, and it has come about . . . that the very foundations of authority have been swept away by removing the primary reason by which some have the right to rule, others the duty of obedience. . . . There are very many who profess catholic teaching concerning social authority and the due regard to be paid to it, the rights of property . . . , the relations of states among themselves . . . ; but in their words, writings, and in the whole tenor of their lives they behave as if the teaching and precepts so often promulgated by Supreme Pontiffs . . . had lost their native*

strength and authority or were completely obsolete. In this there can be recognized a certain kind of modernism in morals, in matters touching authority and social order.'

There can be no divorce of religion from life, no emancipating of political expediency from moral absolutes, without treason to God. We cannot fight for christian principles with the weapons of anti-Christ. We cannot say we are fighting for God if our actions call down upon us the words of judgement : *The voice of thy brother's blood crieth to me from the earth.*

There is one aspect in particular which must surely weigh heavily indeed upon the consciences of christians. The last century has been called the century of the social problem ; and in the last century, as a result, largely, of the failure of christians to live up to their principles and to follow the lead of the Pope, the working masses were lost to Christ. The present century may well come to be called the century of the international problem ; and if again we fail to live up to our principles we shall lose the working masses more disastrously and more irretrievably than before. It is the poor who are the principal sufferers in this modern form of warfare which aims at the destruction not of armies but of peoples. It is the poor who are bombed and burned and despoiled of their houses and their little possessions, their livelihood and the fruit of their labours. It is the poor, whose only desire is to be left in peace ; who have little interest, if any, in the high politics which unleash war ; who gain little or nothing from victory, who may lose everything, whether the issue is victory or defeat. Shall we be insensible to this aspect of the problem, when we reflect what the attitude of these who suffer most will be to the Church, if the

Church is implicated in the conflict? Can we reconcile ourselves to a war which consists so largely in raining death upon these who, having done no crime, cannot conceivably be regarded as guilty? For it must be recalled again that war is only justified by tradition in so far as it can be legitimately regarded as a punishment visited upon the guilty, upon those guilty of attacking the foundation of law upon which society is built. During the last war it was popularly suggested that a sane solution would be to collect the leaders of both sides and allow them to fight out the issue for themselves; one cannot deny an element of common-sense recognition of justice here, for indeed how many of the actual combatants understand for what they are killing one another? But juridically, at any rate, those who accept and fight for the claims of the state are to be counted as participating in the guilt of the state: this cannot be true of those who, knowing nothing of the justice or injustice of the issue, take no part in the conflict. The mass slaughter of the poor is a crime crying to heaven for vengeance; and if it is perpetrated by christians, there is no calculating the depths of the tragedy, the depths of the sin against the heart of God; and there is no calculating the immensity of the scandal. It has been said that scandals must come; but it has also been said: *Woe to him by whom the scandal cometh.*

The christian cannot participate in this crime.

So we come to the ultimate dilemma. It is possible that we shall find ourselves impelled by our consciences to fight because the issue at stake is, we feel, wholly just and wholly vital to the existence, the preservation, of christian principles in our world; but at the same time confronted by the fact that we are powerless to

choose our weapons : if we are to fight, it must be in a war arranged not by ourselves but by others who do not share our views in this respect, a war, therefore, in which the methods we regard as criminal will be used, not incidentally, by this or that individual, but consistently, as part of the general plan of campaign. What are we to do ?

Could we say—it is an attractive solution—that we should resolutely set ourselves against any participation in these crimes, but at the same time not refuse our share in other less exceptionable methods of warfare ? There are difficulties.

It is not only the man who physically commits a crime who is guilty of the crime. If I co-operate formally in his sin, I am guilty of it as well as he. The subject of what theologians call formal co-operation is a difficult one, for it is not always easy in practice to decide whether a given example of co-operation is in fact formal or not. If I help a man to carry a heavy box into his house, under the impression that he has every right to the box, while in fact it is stolen, I cannot be said to be guilty of formal co-operation ; the co-operation is merely material. Again, to take an example nearer the actual problem, if a number of people address themselves to the task of collecting money for a hospital, the fact that one of them is found to be collecting his share by robbing the tills of shopkeepers will not render immoral the activities of the rest. But can this be applied to the problem of war ? Can I argue that our common end is the defence of justice ; and that if some defenders employ illicit means, that does not render immoral the efforts of the rest ? If, at first sight, the situations seem to be parallel, a closer scrutiny reveals an important differ-

ence. The case of war is paralleled, not by the above example, but by one in which a society should say 'We intend to procure money for hospitals by fair means and by foul : by collecting, and by robbery ; will you assist us, reserving to yourself the right to use only fair means if you wish ?' For the man who participates actively in modern war is under no delusions as to the means which will be used ; some of those means are unexceptionable ; but fair means and foul are connected in the unity of a single plan. Is it possible, then, to say that one will support the land war, for example, but not the air war ? Is it possible to participate in the one without co-operating in the other ? For obviously the two parts of the general plan of campaign work in unison.

The difficulty is aggravated by the fact that scandal must also be taken into account. Supposing that the individual might licitly consider himself justified in participating in the war in ways which were not in themselves immoral, on the ground that he wholly repudiated the use of evil means, and dissociated himself from them, it would remain true that to the observer such a dissociation would not be evident. Anyone actively joining in the war is in danger, unless he can make his position clear, of being thought to support the war as a whole. Grave scandal would be the result. It would seem that in these critical days in which the world as a whole is searching for ideals, convinced of the emptiness and futility and falsity of materialism, its eyes are turned on the Church as a force which will not compromise, which asserts its possession of the true ideals of humanity, and which now stands almost if not entirely alone in its calm possession of and fidelity to them. If that rock con-

tinues to stand firm, there is no gauging the extent to which men, searching for truth, will be drawn to it. But if it too should seem to shift, to betray the ideals it so constantly claims to uphold, there is no gauging the extent to which men will turn against it. For, to the outside observer, the Church is simply the community of christians ; if christians discredit themselves, the Church is discredited. There are too many examples already of this bringing of christianity to discredit, as we know only too well ; and the methods of war adopted or excused by christians is already one of them. The responsibility which rests upon the body of christians cannot be exaggerated.

The difficulty of dissociating oneself from what is evil in order to take part in what is justifiable is still greater when one turns to the question of propaganda. It is certain that war to-day cannot be begun, still less continued for any length of time, without intensive hate-propaganda against the enemy. It is sadly true that to-day, even in peace time, we are witnessing a consistent and intensive campaign of such propaganda against other nations ; it is not difficult to imagine the pitch of intensity that would be reached, and the intensity of hatred that would be aroused, if we were at war. In peace time it is possible to view such propaganda objectively and dispassionately ; in war time it not only assumes the authority of an expression of national feeling, but also falls upon minds subjected to war psychosis instead of to the objectivity of reason. Psychologically, then, it would need an heroic fortitude to withstand such propaganda ; there would be every danger of succumbing to it ; and the proximate danger of sin is to be avoided. More than that, the difficulty of dissociating oneself in the eyes of the world from an

attitude of hatred, essential to the war, is surely obvious. It may be possible to say of some criminal methods of warfare that they are restricted to this branch of the fighting forces, and are absent from that. The same cannot be said of hate-propaganda. Even, then, if it be possible to participate in justifiable methods of actual fighting without co-operating in methods that are evil, it seems impossible to participate in fighting at all without co-operating in this pervasive and, to the christian at least, criminal campaign of hate.

The certainty of scandal in this case needs no stressing. Already the cry 'See how these christians love one another' reverberates ironically down the ages of christendom ; are we to invite that cry once again, and to give it, by the magnitude and the horror of modern war, a greater intensity of disgust, and a greater validity, than ever before ?

One is not attempting to argue that there is no question about the answer to these problems, that everything is plain and straightforward, that there is really no problem at all. On the contrary ; there is a very real problem. More than that, it is perhaps the most terrible problem which can confront the conscience at the present time. And it must be emphasized and re-emphasized that it is this which is, ultimately, for the individual to-day, the moral problem of war. It may be necessary to judge whether one's country's cause is right or wrong ; whether a given war is not bound to produce more evil than that which it seeks to remedy ; and therefore whether one can be justified in taking part in it. Those problems are difficult and tragic enough. But they are nothing in comparison with the final tragedy of believing it to be, not only the right, but the duty, of one's country to resort to force,

and yet to feel unable to take part in that resort to force because of the methods adopted. That was the problem, that was the only problem, which many felt to be confronting them in September 1938. One must beg to be forgiven for stressing this so much. There is so much misunderstanding, so much misapprehension of the real issue, not only between christians and non-christians, but between christians themselves. It is so often assumed by those for whom the question of war presents little difficulty, that those for whom it does are deficient in concern for international justice. It is so often assumed that those who feel themselves unable to take part in war to-day are selfish escapists. On the other hand, it is sometimes assumed that anyone who is in fact anxious to take part has not taken the trouble to consider the moral problem at all ; is merely swallowing uncritically the conventional morality of the society in which he lives. Both these sets of charges may be true of individual cases. They are certainly not true in the generalized form in which they are sometimes made, or implied. It is only when one has deeply considered the problem in its entirety, and not merely in one or other of its aspects, that the real dilemma, and the tragedy of it, are revealed.

The need of unity here among christians is absolutely imperative. If only we were at one in our apprehension of the problem, and our reactions to it, we could speak as a body. If we could speak as a body, perhaps it would be possible for us to define the conditions under which we considered it, here and now, morally permissible to fight ; to repudiate explicitly and absolutely the methods we considered immoral ; to dissociate ourselves, not only in word, but in fact, from the killing

of the innocent, the fomenting of hatred against our brethren.

As it is, the individual is forced to act for himself. Before he can act, he must decide. He must decide in accordance with the principle that we may not do evil that good may come. If he is driven to the conclusion that to take active part in war to-day is to do evil, he must try to refuse to do that evil. That does not mean that he must resign himself to another evil : the evil of doing nothing against injustice, the evil of allowing lawless violence to do what it will. We may often be called upon to choose to suffer the less of two evils ; we cannot be called upon to choose to do the less of two evils. ' A man,' as St. Thomas puts it, ' may not commit one sin in order to avoid another.' If it is plainly our duty to resist evil, and the way of resistance by war is closed to us, we must find other ways. If it should come to this, that no way seemed humanly possible to us, then we should be obliged to put our plight in the hands of God, and to resort to supernatural means in default of natural.

One thing is certain. We shall not act rightly, we shall not judge rightly, unless we see and judge the problem in its entirety ; unless we take account of all the factors ; unless we consider not only cause and intention, but means as well ; above all, unless we remember that war to-day, the war not of army against army but of nation against nation, finds its primary objective in the innocent, the poor, those of whom Christ foretold we should hear it said at the Judgement : *Inasmuch as you did it to one of these, my least brethren, you did it to me.*

V

CONCLUSION

AND the devil brought him into an high mountain, and shewed him all the kingdoms of the whole world in a moment of time : and he said to him, To thee will I give this whole power, and the glory of them ; for to me they are delivered, and to whom I will, I do give them. Thou therefore if thou wilt adore before me, they shall all be thine.

In christian eyes, the world has always been, and will until the consummation always be, the battle-field on which unendingly the struggle between good and evil, Christ and Satan, is waged. There is no escaping the fact of evil in the world ; only by forcing ourselves to be unintelligently blind can we fail to recognize, not only sin, but the power of sin. And in these present days there is a growing conviction in the minds of many that that struggle is reaching a critical stage ; that the forces of evil are increasing in strength and in boldness, and that only by a supreme effort will the forces that seek, explicitly or implicitly, to follow Christ prevail against them. That, surely, explains the immense importance of the papacy in the eyes of the world. The issues which threaten to bring our world about our ears are not only, or even principally, political ; they go far deeper than any political question. The ultimate threat which seems to hang over the world is the threat of an attempt to impose

upon it the naked rule of force, of violence ; and of violence not only disregarding law, disregarding absolutes, disregarding Christ, but openly and explicitly seeking to defeat them. Pope Pius XI drew the eyes of men to the papacy as to a rock of truth and a champion, because he discerned, beyond the realm of political rights and wrongs, the emergence of a spiritual crisis, in which the fundamental rights of man would be at stake, the labour of christianity through the centuries be threatened with extinction. Those absolute values which we call christian values concern principally the relation of man to his Maker ; but they include also the other ultimate human values, all that we mean by culture, learning, the life of the spirit, freedom. It may be, then, that we shall find ourselves confronted, in a way that will not admit escape, with the one crisis which utterly and unambiguously concerns the whole world : the crisis which shall decide between christianity and paganism, and, on the secondary but humanly ultimate plane, between civilization and barbarism. It may be, on the other hand, that all this is exaggerated ; there are prophets of woe in every age, and it is unwise to take them uncritically at their word ; but at least there is no denying the presence of the anti-christian forces in our midst, though there is room for debate as to their power and the chances of their predominance ; and at least therefore it is well for us to be forewarned, and forearmed.

It may be that our first temptation will be to excuse ourselves from responsibility. That would be implicitly to adore before Satan. It is the duty of the christian to spend himself in the service of Christ the King : he will not fulfil his duty by renouncing all interest in

the kingdom. If the world-drama, foreshadowed in the personal struggle in the soul of Christ, is to be enacted in our time, we cannot, as christians, assume the role of passive spectators. Our duty is clear : it is to fight.

But then—and it is this that the foregoing pages have sought to make clear—precisely in our will to fight we may find a second temptation. Christ opposed, fought, Satan ; His opposition, His methods of warfare, led Him, who commanded legions of angels, to the Cross. If we look carefully at the whole story of the temptation as recorded in the Gospels we shall find that throughout each of the successive temptings there runs a single thread : our Lord is being tempted, not to do evil, but to try to do good with evil means. His mission is to win the world to Himself ; He is tempted to win the world to Himself by means which seem infallibly to offer success. The rabbinical messianism of the day taught that the Messiah would come as a warrior king to lead Israel to victory, would come in power and in glory. Our Lord had only to manifest His power sufficiently, to give a sign from heaven, and the people would acclaim Him. And the power and the glory of the kingdoms of the world would be His. It would be so easy to urge that He was simply taking the quickest means to winning the world for God. It is that quickest way, the way of facile simplification, the way of power and glory, that is so dangerous, so likely to be wrong.

He *shewed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time*. It has already been suggested that culture cannot be served by war ; and it may be well to return to that thought in drawing together the various strands of the previous chapters. War may be necessary to

defend, not so much a culture, as the freedom to produce or to carry on a culture ; that is clear. But perhaps the christian mind should hesitate even so to resort to methods which are likely to be wrong. The Church, universal, thinks universally. Engaged in planning, not for time, but for eternity, it thinks in terms of centuries rather than of years or decades. In comparison with the life of the world, the kingdoms have indeed been born, and grown, and vanished, in a moment of time ; and they have fallen to dust in spite of, if not because of, their arms and their power. It is not those arms and that power that have endured ; but the labours of those who held aloof from them. Here as elsewhere, it is the material things, for which so much blood is shed and so many crimes are committed, that decay and vanish ; it is the dim and partial vision of truth, goodness, beauty, that remains and slowly grows through all the political cataclysms of history, retarded no doubt by them, yet surviving and even utilizing them. There is only that that does not pass in a moment of time ; and though, once again, there have been occasions when the force of arms was legitimately used to preserve it for a nation or a race, we have to ask ourselves in conclusion whether it can be so now. For if in the past it is mainly to the scholars and the poets and the philosophers who continued their work for humanity as a whole while others fought for national advantage and material gains ; if it is to Sir Thomas Browne writing his *Religio Medici* through the din of civil war, to the people of Provence retiring into their cities to perfect and hand on their heritage of wisdom and beauty while the barbarians thundered over their plains ; if it is for the most part to these that we must look as types of those

who serve humanity ; is it not they who must be our models now, when war has come to be a thing so purely destructive, and preservative only in the sense in which a man who dies for his faith or his honour is said to preserve his faith or his honour ? Christianity, because its concern is for the human family as a whole, takes always the long view. Perhaps it is part of that vulgarity which seems to be innate in the peoples of the North that they take the short view, looking for quick returns, and forgetting the ultimate and the enduring. There is a lesson to be learnt from the Chinese nobleman who, after listening courteously to a eulogy of the French Revolution, asked whether perhaps it would not be well to wait a century or so longer before passing a definitive judgement. It is possible that we shall be faced with the alternatives of submitting to what will seem like the extinction of all the greatest human values, or resorting to general war to defend them ; and perhaps it will be right to choose war, to die as a gesture of affirmation of faith in the things we cannot save. But it is not certain. The kingdoms of the world are born and pass away ; there is only one kingdom against which time, and the gates of hell, cannot prevail. Perhaps it would be wiser, had we the courage, to choose to endure the darkness for a time, knowing that in so doing we should ultimately be preserving for our children more than our arms could hope to defend. However we answer that question, of one thing we may surely be certain : that if we do in fact choose to resort to war in defence of our civilization, it is not that civilization that we shall hand on to our children, but its ruins.

But the ultimate answer is not to be looked for in human wisdom, but in the will of God. If we choose

war, shall we be choosing to adore Satan, because adopting 'means which are intrinsically evil'; shall we be seeking to fight the spirit of the world, in the Gospel sense, with the weapons of the world; shall we be putting our trust in worldly power and glory, instead of in the Cross?

'Never has there been so great a threat of universal oppression of the spirit than in these present years. Never have men so risked losing the sense of truth. And if this liberty is lost to them, what will become of the rest? Wherever one turns one's eyes . . . everywhere there is violence and the threat of further violence. We know that the dangers which weigh upon the world oblige men to bend their energies to the necessities of the moment. But we know, too, that against the deepest sources of these dangers, and against the universal menace to the human person, the spirit, christian liberty is one of the last hopes of mankind. It was that liberty which John Sobieski saved in 1683 from the Turks at the gates of Vienna. To-day, it is the swastika which has entered Vienna. In the death of Austria is to be seen an historical symbol of first importance. If catholic liberty loses its last political ramparts and bastions, it is perhaps because the time has come for the Church to find its strength only in the poor means of love and charity. . . . The spirit is humbled to the very depths of the earth. It is being punished for its own failures. To-day, it is the elemental forces of animal vitality that are taking their revenge, chastising the spirit for its long betrayal of its duties, its betrayal of human realities. There is nothing left for it but to go down, with the understanding of love, to the deepest depths of those elemental realities. So perhaps, later, will a new christendom be

born. . . . If we are to prepare a new christian social order, it must be by christian means. . . . Nothing is more terrible, more cause of scandal, than to see, as we have been forced to see for some years in certain countries, evil, barbarous means employed by men claiming to act in the name of christian order, christian civilization. . . . The character of the end is already predetermined in the nature of the means. Will christians at last be willing to understand ? It is a truth inscribed in the very nature of things, that christendom will re-create itself by christian means, or it will perish completely.¹

The understanding of love ; poverty of means. At least, they describe the method which led to the Cross.

On the other hand, it would be wrong so to concentrate on this line of thought as to forget the idea of duty to society, to the world, and to justice. To the christian conscience it must be obvious that the moral evil caused or occasioned by modern war must immeasurably exceed any economic, political, or territorial disability it can remedy. But it is necessary to repeat once again that aggression may have as its object more than a single nation, more than an economic or political aim. And it is equally necessary to repeat once again that resistance may be not a self-regarding right only, but a duty to the community of nations. It is absolutely vital that we should remember these two things ; because the scandal that may be caused by our participation in what is evil is paralleled by that which may be caused by our apparent insensibility to injustice against the world.

Resistance may be a duty to the community of

¹ J. Maritain, 'La Liberté du Chrétien' (*Questions de Conscience*, pp. 218-223).

nations. Aggression may be more than political, more than imperialism. It may result in the imposition of paganism upon the world. And here again the demon of *simplisme* will be active if we are not on our guard. It is true that a christian community may submit to servitude rather than involve the world in the horrors of war and run the risk of betraying christianity by using unchristian means of resistance. As far as those immediately called upon to suffer are concerned, it would be an heroic act which might convert the world. But what of those indirectly involved? We are bidden to turn the other cheek; but it is our own cheek we have to turn, not other people's. What right have we, then, to involve others in our sacrifice? Two things especially call for notice. A christian community can accept pagan domination and yet remain christian, for matter cannot defeat spirit if the spirit is strong. But the paganism of to-day is likely, as Pope Pius XI pointed out, to achieve the success of Julian the Apostate: for it attacks christianity through education: it takes control of the child. The christian community's act of self-sacrifice might turn out to be an act of the sacrifice of its children to Moloch. Secondly, there is a temptation to think of ourselves, christians, as a self-contained community; to think of a nation as a hundred per cent christian. It is not the case that christian principles have the controlling influence on national affairs. Just as we have to remind ourselves that we cannot arrange our war, so that even in a cause indisputably just we may find ourselves unable to excuse the methods used; so, on the other hand, we have to remind ourselves that while, if we were a christian community, we might be called upon to refrain from the use of force in order to bear witness

to the Gospel, in fact we are a minority in a society which will choose other means. And so we return to the same point : if we concentrate on turning the other cheek we shall in fact be turning other people's cheeks.

These things are actual. For it does indeed seem as though what was a remote possibility is likely to become an actuality : it does seem as though the world may be involved in a conflict in which the issue is not merely political or economic, is not merely a question of an attack upon this or that nation, but of an attack upon the world, and an attack upon the world's most fundamental rights, an attack which threatens the very existence of christianity. Now if—which is not the case—we could think of that conflict as one between pagans and christians, without qualification, if, that is, the side defending the things which christianity values were in fact a hundred per cent christian, then we should have to ask ourselves as christians : (1) whether we could successfully defend our liberties by means which were not intrinsically evil ; (2) whether it would be more christian to offer no more than a non-violent resistance, or whether, on the contrary, this would involve the betrayal of our children to the certainty of paganism ; and it is probable that, in view of all that has been said, it would be right to take the long view, to choose to suffer for a time, and to trust in the power of the will and the strength of Christ to keep the faith alight in the catacombs until barbarism itself should crumble. But that is not the position in which we find ourselves. The conflict, if it is to come, will be decreed by others than ourselves. We shall then find that others are fighting for our interests, fighting to defend, not christianity itself perhaps, but the fundamental liberties which make the spread of christianity possible. So

that if we refuse to take any part in the conflict we shall be open to the accusation of refusing to defend our defenders, of turning the other cheek, not simply in the sense of failing to resist injuries done to others, but in the sense of failing to resist injuries done to those who are fighting to redress our own. That is why these pages have been concerned to argue that there is a real dilemma, that there is no slick solution, and that it is absolutely vital to remember both sides of the problem, because otherwise we may bring christianity into disrepute. There are millions to-day who are as convinced as we can ever be of the futility of war, of the barbarism to which it will lead, of the evil it will do. And they are ready to sacrifice almost anything to avoid war. But they are not ready to sacrifice one thing : the liberty of the world, that liberty which, in christian eyes, is ultimately the liberty to worship God and to ensure that one's children shall worship God.

If, then, such a conflict is to come, it is the question of methods of warfare which is the real problem. Is it or is it not possible to take any part whatsoever without either doing what is intrinsically evil, or co-operating in what is intrinsically evil, or giving scandal by appearing to acquiesce in what is evil? That is why it is so terribly urgent that we should be of one mind and be able to speak with one voice. For then, if we were to find it impossible, on any of the grounds discussed above, to take part in hostilities, at least we could make it clear that our non-participation was not the result of a lack of concern for international justice or for the preservation of the fundamental rights of man ; if, on the other hand, we were to find it possible to take part in this or that aspect of the conflict without doing or co-operating in what is intrinsically evil,

we could make it clear that at the same time we did wholly disassociate ourselves from what was in fact intrinsically evil, and so could avoid the danger of scandal. Unity of mind, and of voice, on this question is perhaps the most urgent need of our time. The eyes of the world are upon the Church. Never perhaps has there been a time when a greater opportunity has been offered to christians of vindicating their faith by standing up without compromise for the principles of the faith, the teaching of Christ ; on the other hand, never perhaps has there been a time of greater danger, a time when a failure to stand up for those principles, a cowardly choosing of compromise, would so dishonour and discredit the faith. This is no matter, then, for hasty conclusions ; still less, for the irresponsible virulence of newspaper controversy. It is a problem which demands all our energy, and our prayer, to the finding of the right solution ; and the finding of it quickly, or we shall be late again.

If that unity is not to be achieved in time, then it is the tragic duty of the individual to decide for himself what course of action he shall follow. His watchword must be the phrase of St. Thomas : A man may not commit one sin in order to avoid another. The individual whose conscience bids him not refuse all active participation whatsoever, must judge in the light of his own conscience, and the possibilities in his own case of avoiding sin himself and scandal to others. But it is better to err on the side of caution : if we are to run the risk of failing either in our duty to international justice and law, or in our duty to follow Christ without compromise in the means we adopt, it is better to incur the former risk than the latter. Let us not forget the damage that was done to christianity in the last war

by the spectacle of those whose patriotism eclipsed dogma and so discredited faith. It is christianity which is our last criterion. And 'christendom will re-create itself by christian means or it will perish completely.'

It was recalled in an earlier chapter that the task of the theologian is to apply eternal principles to the changing circumstances of life. That is only one aspect, however, of his task. Theology is not a static thing, a dead language. Taking its principles from eternal revealed truths, its first object is to enlarge and deepen man's understanding of those truths ; to come, through the labours of centuries, to a more and more integral, more and more profound, appreciation of their implications. That enlargement of the possession of truth is not the task of the theologian only ; it is the expression, ultimately, of the continuous fruitful life of the Church. In that we all have our share. But the need of thought and of prayer is urgent, if events are not to find us unprepared, unsure. If we were of one mind on this subject, if only we could say with one voice: These things we condemn and refuse to share in, these things we are willing and anxious to do, many practical difficulties perhaps might be solved for us. But that is not the chief consideration. The chief consideration is that then we should be strengthened by the thought that we were acting as the Church, with the authority of truth to give us courage ; we should be sure that we were following Christ, and not merely hoping and meaning to follow Christ. We should be as a strong man armed ; because we should be sure that our wisdom was not the wisdom of the serpent ; and that our folly, if folly it seemed, was the folly of the Cross.

What, then, in summary, are the questions which the

individual must ask himself in the event of war? He must ask first if the cause is just : if his country, or his country's ally, is really victim of an unprovoked aggression, and not of an aggression which is the result of his country's refusal to comply with just demands. For if there has been such refusal, such selfishness, justice will consist, not in armed defence, but in the righting of wrongs. He may not take up arms to preserve an unjust *status quo*. Secondly, supposing the cause to be just, has his country a right intention? Will the world as a whole, and not merely his country, benefit ; or will greater evil, moral and physical, be done by taking up arms than by refusing to do so? Thirdly, will the individual, if he decides that war is justified, be able to take part in it without either committing, or co-operating in, or condoning, evil? It may well seem that this third question is the hardest of all to answer in the affirmative. It may well seem tragically true that we should be obliged, at best, to say to ourselves : I feel armed resistance to be not only a right but a duty ; I want to fight ; but I cannot fight with these weapons. I want to resist ; but this is not what I mean by resistance. If that is so, then our lot will be hard indeed ; but our loyalty to God, to christian principles, comes first. We may not do evil that good may come. Christendom will re-create itself by christian means, or it will perish completely. Better to risk our own good name than God's. And if that is the conclusion we come to in regard to war to-day, then it is to God that we must have recourse ; who will not desert us because we have chosen rather to be faithful to the purity of the Gospel than to risk making a compromise with evil and bringing christianity to dishonour.

There is one final thought to which all the foregoing considerations must lead us, and which is surely outside the sphere of controversy. 'As catholics,' said Pope Pius XI, 'are called to consolidate and extend the reign of Christ, so also are they called to consolidate and extend His peace ; and that by the multiple apostolate of the good word, of beneficent activity, and, finally, of prayer, so easy for all and so powerful—all-powerful even before God.'¹ If we find that in a cause which we feel to be just we are nevertheless unable to take part in war, we are bound to work all the harder for justice by such means as are left to us. But whatever conclusion we may come to as to our action in face of the outbreak of war, there can be no doubt whatsoever of our duty to pray, and to pray constantly, for peace. There is no need to stress the earnestness and the frequency with which Pius XI called the catholics of the world to pray for peace ; to recall the pilgrimages for peace made at his express wish, the fact that he made peace one of the intentions of the holy year in 1933, the fact that his papal motto was *The Peace of Christ in the Kingdom of Christ*. The motto of his successor, too, is concerned with peace. There has been a great response to these appeals of the Holy See ; but it is not yet great enough. To take one example : the Union of Prayer for Peace was founded in 1937 in the hope of uniting catholics of every nation in a corporate daily prayer and monthly Mass for peace ; the Pope sent his special blessing to all those who should join it ; in fact it now numbers some 20,000 members. They have promised to do something very simple : to say a prayer every day for peace ; they send their names to the general secretary² or to their national

¹ Address on Christmas Eve, 1930.

² The present writer.

secretaries, and once every month when Mass for peace is offered, their names are placed on the altar that the offering may be their corporate offering. Mass is thus offered in countries as far apart as Denmark and China ; and members of the Union are to be found in many nations. That is a great deal ; but it is not enough. We are bound to work and to pray for peace ; and one of the ways of working for peace is to spread as far as one can the crusade of prayer for peace.

There are many to-day who feel convinced that catastrophe is inevitable sooner or later. It is bad policy to argue in that way, for if we convince ourselves that it is in fact inevitable, it will come. But christians may not believe that it is inevitable. For them the issue between Christ and Satan is already decided ; the power of Christ in His world can be challenged indeed, but not overthrown ; and it is in His power, ultimately, that we put our trust. That is why prayer is so important, since it is ‘ all-powerful even before God.’ If it is true that the world is coming more and more to look to the Church as to a leader, the fact puts a new and special burden, not only on the Holy See, but on every christian : but it is a burden which we can take up with courage and with hope, if we trust in the might, and the mercy, of Him who said, *Fear not ; I have conquered the world.*

